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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
MASTER PLAN REVIEW**

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Property Address:	<b>North Capitol/Michigan Avenue, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>McMillan Reservoir</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>May 26, 2016</b>	<b>X</b>	Conceptual Review
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>		Alteration
			New Construction
			Demolition

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Vision McMillan Partners (VMP) seeks final conceptual design review for Parcel 6 (the park, community center and south service court) and Parcel 7 (the north service court) at the McMillan Reservoir sand filtration site. A narrative summary of revisions accompanies the plans.

The Board conducted multiple reviews of the individual development projects and the overall master plan between 2012 and 2015. In its reviews in July and October 2013, the Board commended the design and compatibility of the park and community center, and concurred with the recommendations in the 2014 preservation plan for the treatment of the above grade resources in the service courts. The Board asked that the final conceptual designs return for review when the project had obtained approvals from the Mayor’s Agent and the Zoning Commission.<sup>1</sup>

**Service Courts**

The treatment of the north and south service courts remains consistent with the concept last reviewed by the Board and the plan approved by the Mayor’s Agent. As illustrated earlier, the courts would be retained and the above grade features within them rehabilitated following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.<sup>2</sup> For budget and maintenance reasons, the pedestrian entrance into the south service court from North Capitol Street has been modified to eliminate the large water wall fountain but would retain a generous publicly-scaled stair into the site. For similar reasons, the fountain at the west entrance to the north service court has also been eliminated and converted to a tiered planted area that will incorporate several of the sculptural sandwashers from elsewhere on the site.

**Park and Community Center**

The park and community center also remain consistent with the previous concept. For cost, security and accessibility reasons, the entrance into the park from North Capitol Street has been simplified to

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<sup>1</sup> The Mayor’s Agent order approving the scope of demolition as necessary in the public interest was issued in April 2015 and can be accessed here: <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu>. The Zoning Commission’s order approving the project as a planned unit development was issued in Nov 2014 and can be accessed here: <https://app.dcoz.dc.gov/content/search/Search.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> The one exception being the walls lining the north service court which, as before, would be removed and the first floors of the new buildings lining it designed to evoke their general character.

eliminate both the steps into the site and the exposed cells shown in the previous renderings (which were reconstructions, as they do not exist in this location). Instead, the planted berm would wrap into the property, with a simple sculptural concrete pedestrian bridge carrying the Olmsted Walk above as before. The naturalistic water feature has been reduced in size, accessible routes through the site refined, and an open plaza area developed that focuses on the retained Cell 28 in order to provide a flexible space for public events.<sup>3</sup> A children's playground has been developed for the area west of the community center, inserted within and retaining the grove of trees previously shown in this area. The design of the community center remains the same modern temple form previously shown; the most substantial change is its relationship to grade on the south, where it now opens up to provide views into Cell 28.

The feasibility of incorporating the original McMillan fountain into the park is also being explored. The fountain was originally located on the reservoir site across First Street but was dismantled and put in storage when a building was constructed on that site. The fountain location has been developed in consultation with HPO and is proposed for the southwest corner of the site to recreate its original positioning at the crest of a hill overlooking the city and accessed from a broad set of stairs.

An interpretation plan for the site has been developed in the form of a walking museum that would include installation of on-site placards upon completion of the park. The interpretation program has been designed to be expanded over time to potentially include an app, site-specific art, and an interpretative center.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find that the final concept plans for the service courts, park and community center to be consistent with the previous conceptual plans, the 2014 preservation report, the approved master plan, and the Mayor's Agent's order, and compatible with the landmark. It recommended that final approval be delegated to staff.*

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<sup>3</sup> Full retention of Cell 28 remains the goal, and stabilization plans and a phased demolition plan to protect it during construction are still being developed by the structural engineer and primary contractor. Once soil is removed from atop the cell and demolition takes place around it, further structural assessment on its condition will be conducted. If the condition requires an alternative approach to retention, this would return to the Board for review.